

JIN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI  
EASTERN DIVISION

JOHN H. WADE, III

PLAINTIFF

VS.

CIVIL ACTION NO.: 24-cv-00196

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

DEFENDANT

---

**DECLARATION OF JAY LADNER**

---

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
COUNTY OF FORREST

My name is Jay Ladner. I am the head basketball coach at the University of Southern Mississippi. Currently, our team is competing in the 2024-2025 season of Division I basketball, and we have started league play in the Sun Belt Conference.

I first learned of John Wade, III approximately two (2) years ago when he participated in an invitation only basketball academy in Las Vegas, Nevada. My assistant coaches personally observed John play, and we wanted to recruit John but did not have a scholarship available at Southern Miss. John went on to play in Division II basketball, and that was his third (3) playing season. Because he had an excellent season in Division II and one-year remaining, we recruited John to play at Southern Miss for the 2024-2025 season.

During the process of recruiting, we learned that John had been granted a hardship extension due to a conflict he had with a head coach in California. John has an excellent academic background and graduated with a degree in Mathematics, and he has excelled both on the court and off the court as a person.



I was excited to have John as a player on the Southern Miss basketball team. He has progressed as a player to the point that he would be the one of the better players on the team and would see extensive playing time. Unfortunately for John, because of the conflict with the coach in California and then having played Division II basketball, he did not have the right to NIL compensation. As a fourth-year player at Southern Miss, John would have the right to NIL compensation, and the prospects are quite good for him. Importantly, his final season of play is critical to be seen by professional teams, and it is my opinion that by playing at Southern Miss, John would have the opportunity to be seen by and play in a league overseas. He must build his basketball resume to do so, and can only do that by playing professional Division I basketball at Southern Miss. I would love for John to play on our basketball team. It is unfair that he has not been allowed to play, as he has only played three of his four allowed seasons. I understand that the five-year eligibility clock is what is preventing the NCAA from allowing John to play, and under these unique circumstances, particularly the tragedy and hardship experienced of the hands of a basketball coach in California, fairness should dictate that John be allowed to play. Technically, his fourth (4) season is partially over, but being allowed to play the second half of the season would allow John to complete his NCAA basketball journey and propel him to his future endeavors on the court and off the court.

John is a fine young man, and he had no choice in having played only three (3) seasons of college basketball. The circumstances of Covid-19, alleged abuse by another coach and his physical maturing process all were circumstances beyond his control. My hope is that John can wear the Golden Eagles uniform to complete his college basketball experience.

Further Declarant sayeth not.

THIS the 23 day of December, 2024.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JAY LADNER

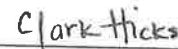
STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
COUNTY OF FORREST

PERSONALLY APPEARED BEFORE ME, the undersigned authority in and for the state and county aforesaid, Jay Ladner, who after being duly sworn by me, stated under oath that the information in the above and foregoing Declaration is true and correct to the best of his knowledge and belief.

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME on this the 23 day of December, 2024.

[SEAL]



  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Clark Hicks